〈Research Article〉

A Contemporary Version of Globalization:
New Ways of Circulating and Consuming Japanese Anime and Manga in East Asia

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Abstract

This research analyzes the process of new ways of globalization. I argue that three actors—individual fans in the world, business companies, and the Japanese government—have circulated Japanese popular culture in the world. This paper reveals how Japanese anime and manga were made global products by dedicated individual fans across the world, even as the fansubs and the methods of circulation are problematic. Content providers have developed a "media mix" to expand their businesses, and have also started to challenge illegal fan activities. Since 2000, the Japanese government has been supporting these businesses, even though it had never seen pop culture as authentic culture until anime and manga became respected outside of the country. Now, however, it attempts to use popular culture as a form of soft power by putting a "national brand" on anime. In other words, because of the success of anime and manga, the global movement has led to nationalism. This paper also gives examples of how such products circulate, are consumed and are reproduced, as well as how they are restricting Japanese popular culture in East Asia. This paper demonstrates diverse activities related to popular culture as well as different purposes of the each actor who have globalized anime and manga.

Key words: Manga, Anime, globalization, nationalism, East Asia, Japan

What is your favorite Japanese anime or manga character? Why? How did you come to know that particular anime? In the last decade, many young people around the world have become able to answer these questions, and to enjoy doing so, because they can easily consume Japanese anime and have their favorite character with them in their daily lives. One Italian university student, when asked by a Japanese researcher whether he liked anime, answered simply that "we have grown up with Japanese anime" (Sakurai 2009: 69). This may seem self-evident, and indeed, similar conditions have developed in North America, the Middle East and Asia as well as Europe (Sakurai 2009: Chapters 1 and 2). In fact, “Japan now produces almost two-thirds of the world’s animation” (Copper-Chen 2010: 3). But what created the conditions for the easy circulation of, and access to, Japanese anime and manga—popular animation and comics—outside of Japan? The answer to this question demonstrates the mechanism behind the globalization of post-war Japanese anime and manga, which have been created since the 1950s. Moreover, it reveals an example of globalization that has been led by three main actors: individual fans, businessmen, and the Japanese government. Analyzing these three actors’ relationships helps us to understand the process of globalization involving the circulation of Japanese popular culture, specifically visual media, in the world. It is important to note that in this paper anime refers specifically to Japanese animation, and manga to Japanese comics. For non-Japanese products, this paper uses the terms animation and comics.

Many scholars in diverse fields have discussed definitions of globalization. Stuart Hall argues that globalization “is nothing new and can be traced back through the long history of Western imperialism” (Wong 2006: 25). Because the circulation of anime and manga has been very active in the past two decades this paper will focus on this particular, recent example of globalization. The main difference between present and past forms of globalization is “the emergence of new global communicational technologies” (Beynon and Dunkerley 2010: 10, and Wong 2006: 25). In short, improvements and developments in technology, such as the Internet and broadband, have allowed anime to spread throughout the world. Without these new technologies, anime could not have become as popular as quickly (Sakurai 2009: 35-37), and its fans could not communicate with each other (Abel 2011: 71). Thus, this paper discusses how the Internet allows people to circulate these forms of Japanese popular culture.

First, I introduce the various actors who have been leading this globalization of Japanese works, how they have done this, and why Japanese anime and manga have become objects of global consumption. Then, this paper discusses how the three actors involved contribute to make anime and manga global products, and show how these actors have interacted, both in cooperation with and against each other. We will see that globalization cannot escape nationalism through the circulation of popular culture.

Three Actors for Globalizing Anime and Manga

According to Shiraishi Sae, instead of nations, individual actors or groups of people have become connected, and interact for their purposes beyond the typical constraints of time and space (Shiraishi 2011: 168). She emphasizes the differences between actors in globalization and internationalization. Internationalization is led by nations for international politics and individual economies. The actors of globalization, however, are individual citizens. As Shiraishi points out, anime and manga fans are the most important and active actors in the distribution of the products they love. However, the popularity of Japanese anime and manga has been supported by business entities as well, such as anime producers, publishers, distributors, the various industries behind anime goods, and others. These are also some of the main drivers behind the globalization of these products. In addition, since 2000 the Japanese government's Cool Japan campaign has supported these business entities to export Japanese popular culture and "enhance the international image of Japan through media cultures" because "the Japanese government is particularly interested in the development of content businesses and in the promotion of cultural diplomacy" (Iwabuchi 2012: 142). This marks the first time that the Japanese government, specifically the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), officially accepted anime and manga as "authentic" Japanese culture.

In 2001, the "Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) released a report on its official support for the Anime industry" (Choo 2012: 86). Nine years later, in 2010, METI established a new Creative Industries Promotion program, called Cool Japan, to promote anime and manga as one of Japan's most internationally recognizable forms of soft power (Choo 2012: 88). The government, especially METI, has accelerated the Cool Japan policy because it believes that the success of content businesses will directly benefit the Japanese economy. Thus, we cannot ignore the role of the government in the global circulation of manga and anime. In fact, Iwabuchi has criticized the Cool Japan policy as a form of nationalism; however, we need to examine both how the government contributes to the globalization of anime and manga, and at the same time, how and why the government needs to bring back nationalism.

The second question related to globalization is how it has happened. Harumi Befu explains how cultural globalization occurs. The first route, according to Befu, "is through the sojourner—emigrants students, businessmen, and others who leave their homelands and settle somewhere else" (quoted in Wong 2006: 25), because these people necessarily take their culture to new places, where the locals are exposed to it. The second route identified by Befu is the "non-sojourner route, through which cultural products spread abroad without native carriers" (quoted in Wong 2006: 25). Anime and manga has been spread in both ways, but the non-sojourner route is currently the main one for distributing Japanese popular culture: via the Internet, especially in recent years. This is one of the important features of current globalization in the circulation of popular culture.

The third question is why Japanese anime and manga have become globally popular. Many scholars have suggested answers to this question. One of the essential points that the scholars insist on is hybridization. For example, Iwabuchi argues that Japanese popular culture is a combination of many cultures, resulting in the disappearance of any perceptible Japaneseness. He calls this *mukokuseki* culture (*Recentering Globalization* Iwabuchi 2002: 29). He also created the phrase "culturally odorless" (Iwabuchi 2002: 256), to describe this feature of Japanese popular culture.

According to Iwabuchi, cultural odor means the way in which “the cultural presence of a country of origin and images or ideas of its way of life are positively associated with a particular product in the consumption process” (Iwabuchi 2002: 257). As an example, the *Astro Boy* or *Speed Racer* TV series which were aired in North America in the 1960s were heavily localized to remove any sense that they were originally Japanese. Even in the 1990s, when *Pokémon* was introduced to North America, characters eat donuts or sandwiches rather than the rice balls they consume in the original Japanese version. Because of these localizations it became easier for anime to spread to and be accepted outside Japan. Current Japanese popular culture, on the other hand, maintains its cultural *odor* because anime and manga fans outside Japan prefer to consume original versions. For example, in my class titled Critical Approaches to Manga and Anime at University of British Columbia in January to August 2017, even students who do not speak the language prefer to watch anime in Japanese with subtitles, in order to keep all the Japanese cultural aspects. Certainly the most serious fans of manga and anime, those who seek out and recirculate such products, care very much about the cultural specificity of those forms. As a result, once Japanese anime became popular, its fans became eager to consume anime that include obvious signs of Japaneseness.

Of course, trends change, and preferences vary. However, I must emphasize that one of the main features of Japanese popular culture—and one of the main reasons for its global success—is hybridization. Wong argues that even “for most Asians, Japanese manga are the hybridization of modernity that has been stereotyped as Western with more traditional attitudes that are identified as Asian” (Wong 2006: 36). In addition to Wong, other scholars have insisted that the main feature of Japanese anime and manga is hybridization of different cultural aspects (Mōri 2011: 32 and Ogi 2010: 32-33). It is partly because of this hybridization of diverse cultural aspects, as well as the combination of American and Japanese animation technics, that many people in the word can easily accept and enjoy consuming them.

The other reasons for the popularity of anime and manga are (1) media mix in capitalist societies, such as creating character goods (Okada 2003; Steinberg 2012); (2) attractive fantasy worlds that let audiences escape from the real world (Allison 2006b: 27; Abel 2011: 90; Hu 2010: 158-59); and (3) fan activities, which are the various ways of consuming and recreating anime and manga, such as cosplay, and creating and sharing derivative works and information among the virtual fan community. I shall return to business aspect of globalizing Japanese anime and manga shortly, but here I introduce surveys by Susan Napier in North America from the 1990s to the 2000s (Napier 2007: 137-148) to demonstrate what aspects of anime attract U.S. fans as examples of attractive fantasy worlds and fan activities.

According to Napier, in the mid-1990s “the majority of anime fans were male (70 percent of [her] respondents), and a majority were in science- or technology-related fields (or if they were students, were majoring in those areas)" (Napier 2007: 138). Napier discusses several fans who are in some ways representative of their gender and generation, and I introduce two of them on this paper. The first person is Marc, a physicist at the University of Texas, and the most longtime anime fan among Napier's respondents. What appeals to him about anime is the cute girls, a common answer among male fans (Napier 2007: 143). Napier points out that "a staple of anime's appeal to young men has been the many adorable, playful, and sometimes surpassingly complex young female characters who are so ubiquitous in anime" (Napier 2007: 143-144). Marc also enjoys shōnen romance, and he said "a love story where the protagonist and the point of view is the lead male… It's something of a surprise to find out how many anime/manga are sentimental love stories aimed at males and told from the male viewpoint…" (Napier 2007:144). Napier added to Marc's point that Japanese anime and manga provide shōnen romance and also shōjo romance, such as *yaoi*. These fans appreciate the openness to sexuality they find in these manga and anime. Napier insists "Japanese media has allowed them to explore a side of themselves in a way that they feel would be impossible in American cultural products" (Napier 2007: 144). This point shows uniqueness and attraction of Japanese popular culture.

A second example of the fans is Maya, who was seventeen years old when Napier met and interviewed her at an anime conversion in the Midwest. Maya is attracted by the fantasy worlds that let her to escape from reality for a while. She is interested in doing cosplay and likes learning how to draw manga and making her favorite characters come alive (Napier 2007: 145). From Napier's survey, we can see that anime and manga function as a safety valve for young people. Although I have only introduced two fans here, they both demonstrate that a major part of the appeal of manga and anime is the fantasy worlds and ideal characters that provide a temporary escape from reality. Fan activities, such as doing cosplay and creating derivative works, contribute to expand these fantasy worlds.

After ten years of research, Napier emphasized that due to "the explosion in fandom and the evolution of age and sex, such typecasting would be impossible. Anime fans come in all shapes and sizes, from all walks of life and with a wide range of approaches to both fandom and to life in general"(Napier 2007: 142). There are, of course, other reasons for the popularity of Japanese popular culture, but these three main features—media mix, attractive fantasy worlds and fan activities—have made anime and manga objects of global consumption.

Japanese Popular Culture Circulations in East Asia

I now turn to a deeper analysis of these three actors and reveal how they contribute to spreading anime and manga in order to permit many people to consume them, and reveals the shape of contemporary globalization in this field. The main force behind this phenomenon are anime and manga fans around the world, without whom Japanese youth culture would not have become so popular. I describe the history of the circulation of manga and anime in East Asia and the activities of Asian fans, because through them we can see the remarkable relationships between Japan and other East Asian countries, specifically Korean, Taiwan and China. This paper analyzes how Japanese anime and manga have flooded the region by analyzing each country's features, especially governments' regulations and the people's reactions.

According to Ishii, the flow of Japanese anime and manga in East Asia has some common factors, such as (1) economic growth, (2) cultural similarity and (3) government policies such as controlling the flow of banned Japanese popular cultural goods (Ishii 2003: 1-5). Iwabuchi also mentions cultural similarity: "Japanese popular culture represents cultural similarities and a common experience of modernity in the region that is based on an ongoing negotiation between the West and the non-West-experiences that American popular culture cannot represent" (Iwabuchi 2002: 270). Because of the history of Japanese imperialism and colonialism in East Asia, China, Korea and Taiwan had prohibited the importing of Japanese popular cultural goods after WWII (Ishii 2003: 7). However, despite these restrictions, such goods still flowed in illegally, both as pirated versions, or smuggled originals.

In Korea, Japanese manga were smuggled and illegally copied for distribution from the 1950s. People could read comics at street shops from the middle of that decade, and then at rental shops, *manhwa pan* (漫画房), where one could pay to borrow comics. While these businesses ostensibly supplied Korean products, in fact, the rental shops also had many pirated Japanese manga (Yamanaka 2004: 112). In the process of copying Japanese manga, distributors often changed characters' names from Japanese to Korean, changed backgrounds to make them more Korean, and erased Japanese artists' names and put Korean artists' names on their products instead. Thus, Korean readers often read these *Japanese* manga as Korean comics (Yamanaka 2004: 114). This remained common until the 1970s. Even as late as the mid-1970s *Candy Candy* (1975), which became very popular in Korea, was still illegally copied and was read as a Korean comic (Yamanaka 2001: 128).

Korean society has perceived comics as vulgar, especially in the 1980s (Yamanaka 2001: 130). In addition, the government strictly examined them to ban the publication of immoral comics, especially in the 1970s (Yamanaka 2001, 129); however, manga escaped this scrutiny because they were not supposed to even exist in Korea, and as a result, Japanese manga became a form of underground culture. Both Korean comics and manga became more popular in the 1980s. After the June 28 Declaration in 1987, manga, which had hitherto been a form of underground culture, began to flow visibly into Korean society, because comic magazines began to appear. These magazines introduced many illegally copied manga and distributed them more widely. At first, these manga were not referred to as Japanese, but they began to be recognized as such as Korean people began to travel overseas, and could more easily get information about Japan. In 1991, the Korean Ethics committee started examining manga in order to ban the importation of harmful products. This ironically implied that importing Japanese manga was now legal (Yamanaka 2001: 132).

As Yamanaka mentions, comic magazine publishers needed manga to maintain interest in their magazines: they met the needs of the Korean market because manga are diverse, targeting all ages from children to adults. Thus, the number of imported manga increased dramatically in the 1990s (Yamanaka 2001: 133), although this boom brought anti-Japan sentiment (Yamanaka 2001: 134). In fact, because Japan was regarded as lowbrow in Korean, both Korean and Japanese comics were also seen as vulgar (Yamanaka 2001: 135). Needless to say, the main problem has always been based on the unresolved historical issues of Japanese colonialism and imperialism. Under these circumstances, Korean manga fans had to say “I don’t like Japan although I like Japanese manga” (Yamanaka 2001: 135). Since 1998 censorship of Japanese culture in Korea has reduced because of the Japan-South Korea Joint Declaration. First, in 1998, restrictions on manga were removed, and then, in 2000, the regulation of anime, which received international awards, was also removed.

In Taiwan, the government banned the importation of Japanese culture after 1972, when the Treaty of Taipei (Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty) lapsed. In addition, the Taiwanese government strictly regulated popular culture by examining media such as TV programs until the 1980s. As in Korea, Japanese popular culture entered Taiwan illegally and was regarded as a form of underground culture. Because such products were severely restricted, Taiwanese people were eager to consume them; that is, Japanese popular culture flowed into Taiwanese society through underground media, such as an illegal cable TV and underground radio stations (Ishii 2003: 10-11). The government relaxed restrictions on Japanese films in the 1980s, and on Japanese popular songs and TV programs in the early 1990s, and at present there are no restrictions on importing Japanese culture (Ishii 2003: 7-11). Interestingly, the phrase 哈日族, or “the tribes that adore Japan,” emerged around 1998 (Ishii 2003: 13). As Iwabuchi points out, Japanese popular culture represents *modernity*—again, because government restrictions actually encouraged people to consume Japanese popular culture.

The situation in China differs from those in Korea and Taiwan. As Ishii explains, one important reason for this is that economic growth occurred later in China than in Korea and Taiwan. The diffusion of TV dramatically increased in the 1980s to 1990s, and TV stations started importing foreign programs. Formally, the Japanese anime *Astro Boy* was imported in 1980 (Shuku 2011: 46). American animated shows were also imported (Shuku 2011: 47). In the 1990s, China imported many anime, and even the term 動漫 was created to refer specifically to Japanese anime and manga (Shuku 2011: 48). However, since 2000 the Chinese government has regulated foreign animation, including anime. For example, from 2006 it was not permitted to air foreign animation between 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM, and in 2008 the time range was expanded to 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM (Ishii 2009: 18); for this reason, it is unusual for Chinese children to watch foreign animation. We can assume that these children will therefore be far more influenced by domestic animated products. Another example of is that China imported only two new foreign animations between 2005 and 2006. In fact, only 3% to 6% of animated shows in China are Japanese, aired through the country's three main animation channels. Even fewer are American (Ishii 2009: 18).

At the same time, however, only 8.6% of Chinese university students prefer Chinese animations, while 69.3% prefer Japanese anime (Ishii 2009: 21), which they likely access online. Indeed, the key to accessing anime is the Internet, because they are often available for free. Although the Chinese government has tried to remove foreign animation from Chinese TV channels in order to control the people' experiences and interests, Chinese youth know how to get and enjoy foreign anime.

Through the historical flow of anime and manga in these three countries, we can clearly see that government restrictions have never worked to stop the importation of such products, because fans' desires have been much stronger than the governments' restrictions. In East Asia, pirated versions of manga and anime have been easily available and enjoyed by fans. The number of manga/anime fans in the world has dramatically increased since the diffusion of the Internet and broadband, although there are still pirated (paper) versions of manga, especially in Asia. New technology allows people all over the world access to the same cultural products, anime and manga. Thus, government restrictions will not control people as easily as they once did.

Next, I demonstrate the mechanisms of circulating anime and manga via new global communicational technologies in order to demonstrate how anime fans contribute to the global distribution of anime, even as their activities remain controversial.

Fans Activities with New Global Communicational Technologies

Many manga and anime fans merely read or watch manga or anime. However, new communication technologies—the Internet and broadband—have dramatically changed the mechanisms of circulation of anime and manga, because very soon after their initial releases individuals can now upload items on sharing websites with "high-quality translations of Japanese releases for free to fellow fans" (Condry 2010: 194). According to Condry, this fan activity is called fansubbing. Fansubbing is the important key term in this paper, because it contributes dramatically to anime and manga globalization. At the same time, these new mechanisms of circulation have brought controversy. I discuss fansubbing to reveal its important roles, and I insist that this activity should not completely be banned, because it contributes greatly to globalizing anime and manga, and to creating new virtual and transnational communities.

According to Condry, "fansubbing is the practice whereby groups of overseas fans of Japanese animated films and TV shows ('anime'), digitize, translate, add subtitles to, and make available online unauthorized copies of TV series and films . . . The anime fans who participate in this world, either by making, downloading, or watching fansubs, widely acknowledge that the practice breaks copyright law" (Condry 2010: 194). Because anime and manga are so widely available for free, manga artists and animators receive less money to recoup the energy and expenses necessary to create outstanding manga and anime. In short, they have become unable to create new anime and manga as a result of their small incomes, meaning that fans are unwittingly contributing to the reduction of the products they most enjoy.

Although we can see the negative aspects of fansubbing, Condry maintains that it is necessary. There are two main reasons. First, fansubbers' "translations are generally more detailed, more visually pleasing, and they provide more linguistic and cultural depth than the commercial releases" (Condry 2010: 201). Second, people—whether wealthy elites or not, representatives of powerful corporations or private individuals—can produce and share information through the Internet as *a free speech tool*. In short, this activity is "producing a more democratic public sphere" (Condry 2010: 199). Fansubbing is an aspect of this new practice. In addition, "what fansubbers reveal is a logic of transnational desire bound up with the motivation to educate a curious audience of fellow anime fans" (Condry 2010: 203). The Internet and broadband have enabled these fansubbers not only to provide free anime with precise subtitles and cultural depth, but also to communicate with each other in ways that were previously impossible.

Because of the new ways of communication, anime have been discussed and shared by fans across the world. In short, information about anime is circulated much more widely and discussed more deeply. As a result, even for the anime industry, fansubbing is a valuable way of promoting their products globally. For example, when Condry interviewed Suzuki Toshio, a producer at Studio Ghibli, and asked him "do you think fansubbing is good or bad?" (Condry 2010: 205), Suzuki offered only a smile and silence: the best response was no response. Suzuki knows that the Studio Ghibli depends on its fans and cannot control them (Condry 2010: 205). Even anime production companies cannot completely repudiate fansubbing, and they continue to allow fansubbers to circulate free anime through the Internet. Although fansubbing is breaking copyright law and reducing profits for the industry, the fansubbers also add value to anime and promote them widely. In addition, these fansubbers, especially those who add free subtitles and explanations, do not receive profits, but rather work for free to support the transnational community within the Internet, and so we should also consider that their works can bring positive aspects, such as social dynamics, that may bring economic value to the industry in the future.

Passionate fan activities, which have accelerated the popularity of anime and manga, include not only fansubbing but also cosplay. A combination of the English terms "costume" and "play," this fan activity is also globalizing and encouraging grass-root relations in the world by allowing fans to share their experiences. For example, the World Cosplay Summit, which is held annually in Nagoya by Television Aichi Broadcasting and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is one of the biggest cosplay contests. At this contest, cosplayers from all over the world compete to be chosen “the best cosplayer from the world top level cosplayers.”[i] Cosplay conventions are held all over the world, even on university campuses, so that many cosplayers participate in regional conventions to gather and perform as their favorite characters. Cosplay has become one of the exciting, global fan activities. Therefore, I analyze each country’s conventions to describe their features. Although this paper focuses on East Asia, it is also important to analyze Western cosplayers to show that this fan activity is one of the most influential factors for globalizing Japanese anime and manga. I examine American and Chinese cosplayers by comparing them with their Japanese counterparts to show both the common and different attitudes toward cosplay and its attractiveness.

According to Napier’s interviews with American youth, the attractiveness of being a cosplayer is the ability to transform. “To transform is to change one’s identity, to become other, if only for a little” (Napier 2007: 161). According to Napier’s interviewees, “anime and manga provide a plethora of colorful possible identities more than Western science fiction and fantasy” (Napier 2007:164). Cosplay lets fans temporarily change their identities. In addition, “anime and comics are the perfect sites for imaginative visual fantasy” (Napier 2007: 164) to escape from the real society. Thus, cosplay gives fans access to fantasy worlds where they can be different people. For example, being a character lets the cosplayer become genderless; male cosplayers can enact female characters in a very open and relaxed environment, such as conventions. In addition, as “anime offers an entire realm of identity possibilities . . . anime costume play gives the fans the opportunity to transcend the limitations of human bodies, to explore new frontiers where the genetic inheritance with one was born can be cast away” (Napier 2007: 167). From this phenomenon, Napier suggests that “the appeal of cosplay is a testament to the increasing importance of fantasy in the world around us” (Napier 2007: 166). If some East Asian youth like cosplay for similar reasons, we can state that anime costume play is also global phenomenon.

Fans activates as Global Phenomenon

Research by Ka and Senno describes Chinese cosplayers. I discuss Chinese cosplayers and compare them with American cosplayers to illustrate similarities and differences. If we perceive the similarities more readily than differences, we can say that not only Japanese anime and manga, but also the way of consuming these products, have become globalized in the same way. Senno’s interviews give us insight into cosplayers’ opinions. Xi (喜喜), a female Chinese cosplayer and cosplay makeup artist, said “I sometimes have to give up what I want or have to hide what I think in daily life; however, manga and anime characters have strong personality and ability to take action that we can’t do. That’s why I want to do cosplay to be the energetic character” (Senno edit 2012: 128). Another cosplayer said, “I would be able to transform into my favorite character if I had the costume. In other words, I can release myself completely when I wear the costume because the costume unmask myself that always be hidden, and I can be free when I wear the costume at a convention” (Senno edit 2012: 153). As we saw in Napier’s article, American youth are also fascinated by cosplay because cosplay gives them “colorful possible identities.” Thus, among fans in both the East and the West, cosplay is valued for similar reasons: (1) transforming into a favorite character; and (2) escaping from real world to be free in the fantasy world for a period of time or revealing aspects of themselves that are often hidden in the real world; that is, contemporary youth the world over have similar desires and perform them in similar ways—by being cosplayers. Thus, the Internet can provide not only visual aspects of popular culture (pictures), but globalized customs as well.

According to Ko, “Virtual space in the Internet is the ideal space for sharing the information and the products of anime. The connection between virtual and real through the Internet promotes cosplay widely” (Senno 2012: 148), because one way of effectively expressing themselves as cosplayers is uploading their pictures on websites (Senno 2012: 148). Western and Asian youth have the same tools—a computer and access to the Internet—and consume the same products, so that their ways of consumption have become very similar. In other words, the globalization of manga, anime and cosplay through the Internet helps youth around the world perform the same activities.

However, I have also found some differences between some Chinese cosplay conventions and most Japanese and American cosplay conventions. These come about because of the intervention of third parties. According to Ka Hin, cosplay was introduced in China at the end of the 1990s through anime and manga fans in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and became popular in mainland China after 2002 especially because of the diffusion of the Internet (Ka 2012: 9). The biggest difference from Japanese/American conventions is that Chinese conventions, including those dedicated to cosplay, are supported by the Chinese government and state enterprises. The government’s purpose in this involvement, as Ka Hin argues, is to control cosplay culture and make it Chinese, that is, to Sinicize it, in order to create a “Chinese cultural industry” (Ka 2012: 101). On the other hand, Japanese anime and manga fans organize and hold conventions as volunteers in order to avoid interference from other agencies, and to give fans freedom. For example, Comic Market in Japan, the biggest convention, is completely organized by volunteers. Although there are some (though not many) commercial companies involved selling their products there, they are visually and physically separated from fans’ activities, such as selling *dōjinshi* and cosplaying. These companies are not present as organizers or volunteers.

The differences between China and Japan include not only the organizers but also some of the cosplayers themselves. There are two types of Chinese cosplayers. One is hobby cosplayers, like their Japanese counterparts. The other is business-oriented cosplayers (Ka 2012: 76). Business-oriented cosplayers form a group, wear costumes, give performances, and are eager to win competitions at the conventions (Ka 2012: 76). Because the government and businesses are involved in the fans' activities, the forms of fan activity are very different from Japanese and North American ones. However, I should emphasize that many Chinese cosplayers also enjoy transforming themselves into their favorite characters because cosplay lets them become much freer and more ideal as persons. It is important to keep comparing fans-oriented activity with the government and business-oriented activity in order to see the different results in this field. Once the government becomes involved in and controls fans' activities, the fans' activities inevitably lose their freedom and spontaneous creativity.

When analyzing cosplayers around the world, we can recognize that anime and manga fans tend to pay a lot of attention to the characters. In other words, they consume *characters* rather than the *content* of the story. What does it mean to "consume a character"? According to Allison, the role of characters for children is to create an "*implicit family* that is dependable and gives the children love" (Allison 2010: 300). In order to have an implicit family, children surround themselves with character goods in daily life. Furthermore, Senno insists that characters in anime/manga, light-novels, and fans' magazines *(dōjinshi)* provide Chinese youth calmness, sympathy, and an imaginary space. Thus, the characters supplement young people's stressful lives (Senno 2012: 73). Thus, the meaning of consuming characters is always keeping one's favorite characters at one's side. An advanced fan activity—another way of consuming characters—is creating *dōjinshi,* derivative works, by using the characters from the original works to make new fantasy worlds for their own pleasure. Producing *dōjinshi* is also one of the most popular manga and anime fan activities around the world.

Consuming characters is important for both fans and for businesses in the cultural industry as well. In order to reveal how businesses have become involved in the anime and manga industry and anime fans' activities, I will analyze the concept of the "media mix" in anime and manga businesses, subsequent to the analysis of fans and fans' activities. However, before I move on to the business aspect, I will re-emphasize the importance of anime and manga fans' activities for helping anime and manga globalize. As we have seen, there are three main fan activities that spread Japanese anime and manga: (1) fansubbing: rapidly providing free anime with subtitles for other anime fans, and sharing information and discussing anime; (2) Cosplay: wearing anime or manga characters' costumes to transform into other personas at conventions that are organized by fans; (3) consuming anime and manga characters, such as having character goods and creating *dōjinshi.* All these activities are led by the fans and for the fans. Some of these activities, such as conventions, are held in Asia, Europe and North America, although the forms of these conventions are slightly different: Japanese conventions are organized and consumed by fans; American conventions often provide information on aspects of

Japanese culture (food, language, martial arts, etc.) that Japanese convention do not; Chinese conventions are supported by the government and state companies and participated in by fans. When analyzing the forms of conventions throughout the world, we can recognize those differences; however, the way of consuming and circulating anime and manga is similar, especially watching/reading and enjoying anime and manga, and sharing information or opinions by means of the Internet and broadband. In addition, the attraction of doing cosplay is the same for Asian and Western youth. Because of the Internet and the new way of consuming cultural products, the globalization of anime and manga has occurred since the beginning of the 21st century.

In the next section I describe the anime and manga business to show how businesses involve themselves in the globalization of anime and manga in different ways from the fans.

Anime and Manga Business

Analyzing the manga and anime business is essential to seeing their strategy for the globalization of anime and manga. I discuss anime producers, manga publishers, toy and other product producers, known collectively as the *content business*, to reveal how they promote anime/manga and related products to the world. As I have discussed, consuming characters is the essential ways of consuming anime and manga. Thus, I focus on the relation between characters and the content business—the media mix—because the media mix strategy has succeeded to circulate anime and manga (Steinberg 2012: 7). In addition, we must recognize how content businesses have become related to the Japanese government.

From Nakamura's research in 2003, 69% of total book sales in Japan consisted of manga (Nakamura 2004: 9). Further, 60% of animation aired in the world was Japanese. Over 80% of animation aired in Europe was Japanese (Nakamura 2004: 10). Since the 1980s in Asia and the 1990s in North America, Japanese anime and manga have become increasingly popular (Nakamura 2004: 10). The popularity of anime and manga has been promoted by the media mix, which is "the phenomenon of transmedia communication, specifically, the development of a particular media franchise across multiple media types, over a particular period of time" (Steinberg 2012: 135). Steinberg describes the details of media mix by focusing on the anime media mix. According to Steinberg, "the anime media mix, with its serial proliferation of commodities and its productions of consuming subjects that glide easily between television program, comic, toy, and candy, is living proof that a different kind of movement—one that relies on still images and their transmedia communication—produces an expanded economy of return" (Steinberg 2012: 7).

The essential point of the anime media mix is characters. Anime characters are immobile and "the immobility of the image and the centrality of the character are also what have allowed anime to forge connections with toys, stickers, chocolates, and other media-commodities, developing the media mix and its modes of consumption that are so essential to anime's own commercial success—and survival" (Steinberg 2012: 7). This effective business form, media mix, was started in the early 1960s in Japan, and the first media mix anime character was *Astro Boy.* Tezuka Osamu, who created *Astro Boy*, was in a financial crisis and needed more income to produce his works and support his company; he thus started the character-copyright business (Schodt 2007: 74-75). At the beginning of media mix, chocolate companies, such as *Meiji Co., Ltd.*, started using anime characters in promotions, with great success (Steinberg 2012: 37). Another form of media mix is converting manga to anime, anime to live action movies, movies to any kind of character goods, in order to surround anime fans and children with their favorite characters. Thus, the character business and the media mix cannot be avoided. Okada emphasizes the importance of the character business. When she interviewed one Japanese anime producer, she heard that every kind of commercial product for children featuring characters is available with one exception: text books (Okada 2003: 83). Anime and manga characters and character goods are very popular not only in Japan but also in Southeast Asia (Okada 2003: 83). The character business has succeeded in many places in the world.

Another significant point of the content business and its role in the globalization of manga and anime is the process itself of producing anime—because Japanese anime productions have subcontracted their works to other East Asian and South East Asian countries, such as Korea, Taiwan, China and Philippines. In other words, many anime are not 100% "made in Japan," but are "made in international countries" (Mōri 2011; Baek 2010; Wong 2006.) The reason why anime productions subcontract to other countries is that animation production companies have experienced periods of financial difficulty. According to Baek, 1973 was the first time that *Tōei Company Ltd.* outsourced part of their anime production to a Korean company (Baek 2010: 103). However, Korean labor costs have increased since the 1980s, so Japanese production companies have shifted to subcontracting to Taiwan and Malaysia since the 1980s, and to the Philippines since the 1990s (Baek 2010: 107-109). Interestingly, according to Baek, Japanese anime production companies do not publicize the fact that their products are international. Recently, the Japanese government has emphasized that anime and manga are *Japanese* products; however, they are actually not "purely" made in Japan.

On the other hand, manga publishers have a different story. Manga have been very popular in Japan since the 1950s, so that the domestic manga market has been large enough to maintain the manga industry until the early 2000s. In addition, there were too many pirated versions of manga in Asia to be controlled. At the same time, the royalties from Asian publishers were too small to make them profitable because of the different price levels (Ito, Ogi edit 2010: 3-4) and government restrictions. Thus, Japanese publishers were not interested in doing business in Asia. As for the North American manga market, Japanese and American publishers have collaborated to distribute translated manga throughout North America. Thus, manga have been released legally. One of the most famous manga publishers is *VIZ Media*, which is jointly owned by Japanese and American publishers. Another is *Tokyopop*, which is a distributor, licensor, and publisher of anime and manga (Cooper-Chen 2010: 110-113). As these companies have made copyright contracts with Japanese publishers, unlike in Asia, many manga and anime have existed legally in North America. In short, the collaboration of Japanese and American companies has promoted anime and manga throughout North America.

The same thing happened with anime production companies, such as *Studio Ghibli*. Since 1996, when *Studio Ghibli* formed a business relationship with *Disney*, *Ghibli* anime has been successfully distributed in North America. Thus, as global businesses cooperate with local companies, these collaborations spread anime and manga widely in North America. In 2008, *DreamWorks* bought the rights to make a 3D live-action film of *Ghost in the Shell*, originally a manga which became a very popular anime (Fleming and Siegel 2008: *DreamWorks Picture*). This Hollywood live-action was released in March 2017 (Jaafar 2016: *DreamWorks Pictures*). This example demonstrates a collaboration of media mix and copyright business that expand Japanese anime and manga in the world.

I have discussed four main methods of globalizing anime and manga by businesses: (1) media mix: expanding manga to anime, to movies, to anime songs (music), to anime character goods; there are thousands of business opportunities inside and outside Japan; (2) selling copyrights of anime and manga as well as copyrights of characters in these visual media to overseas companies: allowing overseas company to show the anime or publish manga, to create different forms of media which are based on Japanese anime and manga and/or to use characters for producing products for anime fans/consumers; (3) international products: Japanese anime have been made internationally because producers have needed to outsource to East and South East Asia for financial reasons. Although anime have been regarded as 100% Japanese products, they are international products; (4) business tie-ins: collaboration of Japanese and foreign publishers. These factors reinforced the globalization of anime and manga.

Once anime and manga became global businesses, however, new issues arose. The biggest problem is making copyright contracts between different companies inside and outside Japan. Thus, the government tries to support managing licenses between companies in order to let Japanese companies do media mix and global business smoothly outside Japan (METI, 15)[ii]. In the final section, therefore, I analyze government activities.

Anime and Manga as "the National Brand"

Although the Japanese government is one of the three main actors for the globalization of anime and manga, it has another aim; improving the national image around the world. In short, the government has not only promoted the globalization of anime and manga but also emphasized nationalism. Analyzing the Cool Japan campaign reveals how the government tries to bring back nationalism in the global age. The Ministries of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Foreign Affairs (MOFA) were the primary forces behind Cool Japan, and so this paper examines these two ministries' Cool Japan policies. METI has supported private Japanese businesses to promote anime and manga as global products. On the other hand, MOFA has tried to improve the image of Japan. This paper analyzes these ministries' policies and reveal that anime and manga cannot be simply a form of soft power for Japan, but rather exist as part of the "national brand," which emphasizes nationalism.

One of the triggers for the Cool Japan policy was Douglas McGray's article, "Japan's Gross National Cool." In the article, McGray insisted that "… in cultural terms at least, Japan has become one of a handful of perfect globalization nations… In other words, Japan's growing cultural presence has created a mighty engine of national cool" (McGray 2002: 53). McGray emphasized the popularity of Japanese culture as a source of economic and political power around the world. However, he also mentioned that "while Japan sits on that formidable reserve of soft power, it has few means to tap in" (McGray 2002: 53). His point is actually very important to think about the meaning of soft power and how it works. The next point I consider is how the government understands soft power and the national brand.

In addition to McGray's article, *Cool Britannia*, which was a period of increased pride in the culture of the United Kingdom and promoted the British national brand, was another trigger for emerging Cool Japan (Uchiyama 2012: 119). As a result, the Japanese government was encouraged to promote popular culture in the world. For example, METI identifies the aim of Cool Japan as follows: "METI promotes overseas advancement of an internationally appreciated 'Cool Japan' brand, cultivation of creative industries, promotion of these industries in Japan and abroad, and other related initiatives from cross-industry and cross-government standpoints."[iii] In order to achieve this aim, METI's tasks were: (1) establishing a Japanese brand; (2) establishing a broadband content market; (3) encouraging a fair trade environment between distributors and producers; (4) creating funding routes to producers; and (5) cultivating creators and producers (Choo 2012: 91). We can clearly see the aim of METI; creating a bigger content (anime, manga, visual media) market outside Japan to increase the Japanese economy and show the "Japan brand" as a cool nation. Moreover, MOFA has a different strategy to emphasize the national brand.

MOFA's website[iv] states that in order to improve the status of Japan in the world, the government has tried to use its soft power, which includes recent Japanese popular culture, such as manga and anime. Thus, it established the Public Diplomacy Department in 2004 to improve Japan's soft power. It also describes the meaning of soft power by employing Joseph Nye's definition of soft power: "Soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, values, and policies" (Nye 2008: 94), and hard power: Hard power is the ability "to force other countries to change through the treat or use of military or economic weapons" (Nye 2008: 95). In order to use Japanese soft power, MOFA created three main projects that use popular culture; (1) the international MANGA award;[v] (2) anime ambassador; (3) Pop Culture Sent Communicates, or The カワイイ(Kawaii) Ambassador. In short, "popular culture began to be seen as a source of national soft power and as a new export" (Mōri 2011: 40). That is why METI and MOFA have led the Cool Japan campaign.

However, MOFA's projects cannot be understood as soft power. In fact, it is impossible to say that these three projects are used as soft power because the world of manga or anime does not have strong political messages; those originate with the Japanese government itself. If the government were to put messages into manga or anime and distribute them, these efforts would become mere propaganda, which would not be able to attract non-Japanese people (or possibly even Japanese people). In short, manga and anime cannot work as soft power, a means to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction. The attraction of anime and manga is *fantasy*, an escape from the real world. As Allison argues, quoting an American child, "'Japan is cool because it produces cool toys for American kids.' Japan is a toy itself" (Allison 2009: 96). It could be argued that, in this context, Japanese popular cultural products have no diplomatic or political power.

Moreover, some scholars have critiqued even Nye's definition of soft power. According to Yong Wook Lee, we cannot know what kind of soft power is actually influential and powerful; soft power also cannot avoid or reduce hard power (Lee 2011). In fact, Nye believes that soft power and hard power should be commensurate. However, Lee's approach—trying to reduce hard power by means of soft power—is ideal for world peace, even as the combination of soft and hard power is more realistic and influential, as Nye has insisted. Another scholar, Shin-wha Lee, has also criticized Nye's definition of soft power, insisting that it cannot be evaluated (Lee 2011). When Shin-wha Lee discussed Japan, Korea and China's diplomatic politics by analyzing their economic power and cultural attractions, she used economic power as a measure of soft power, although Nye defined economic power as hard power. In other words, it is very hard to distinguish the attraction of the nation and its economic power (Iwabuchi 2007: 88), especially because there is no system for evaluating soft power.

However, the issues of using Japanese popular culture as soft power in cultural globalization are that there is no ability to cause other countries do what Japan wants them to do, and it raises the issue of nationalism. In fact, Iwabuchi insists that employing anime and manga as a component of diplomatic policy is impossible because the popularity of anime and manga cannot erase the unsolved historical issues of Japanese colonialism in Asia (Iwabuchi 2007: 98). Furthermore, Ishii insists that the popularity of anime and manga in China is not related to the trend of purchasing Japanese hard products. In short, the images of popular anime characters do not have the ability to encourage non-Japanese people to buy Japanese products like cars and electronics (Ishii 2009: 26). The attractive fantasy worlds in anime and manga are not connected to or considered as Japanese.

The real issue of employing anime and manga for diplomatic policy is that it brings up the problem of nationalism. In fact, using cultural products to emphasize the national brand has been the trend since the late 1990s (Mōri 2011: 40). In fact, the Korean government was the first to engage cultural policy in East Asia, in the late 1990s, and it succeeded in the early 2000s. This was the time of the Korean Wave—the popularity of K-pop and Korean TV dramas in the East Asia—and it is one of the best examples of a government successfully promoting the "national brand" (Mōri 2011: 37). The Japanese government followed with its own Cool Japan policy in the early 2000s. The Chinese government started establishing its national cultural policy—supporting Chinese anime industries since 2004—although it has not yet succeeded (Mōri 2011: 38) because "Chinese popular culture has not yet mastered globalized styles, which pleasurably and sophisticatedly represent the everyday experiences of capitalist society" (Iwabuchi 2010: 151). Kukhee Choo insisted that these governments' cultural policies are promoting "internationalization" not globalization, because they can only function in the international system by emphasizing each nation (quoted in Tanikawa edit 2010: 67).

Iwabuchi also insists that the Cool Japan campaign just promotes brand nationalism, which means emphasizing the greater image of the nation's economic and political power. In other words, putting stress on the national brand means emphasizing nationalism. For example, by putting the national brand on anime and manga, the government tries to emphasize that popular anime and manga is always "made in Japan." The government hopes to suggest that Japanese people are cute, kind, powerful, and queer like anime and manga characters, and also that Japan itself is a wonderful nation like the fantasy worlds in anime. The aim of the Japanese government is to attract people in other countries by using popular anime and manga characters. As I have argued, however, the Cool Japan campaign cannot achieve this goal because anime and manga are fantasy, and are not related to the real world/Japan. In addition, anime are not 100% made in Japan. They have been created through the collaboration of East and South East Asian artists since the 1970s, as Mōri (2011: 33), Condry (2010) and Baek (2010) indicate. Therefore, the Japanese government cannot put its national brand on anime. The government should acknowledge that "Japanese anime [are] product[s] of globalization" (Mōri 2011: 34).

Iwabuchi has made another critical point about the government's participation: "brand nationalism does not give attention to the issues of power relations, domination and marginalization" (Iwabuchi 2007: 149); further, it ignores the existence of the global labor that partly produces "the national brand" products (Iwabuchi 2007: 150). Assigning a "pure" nationality to these products is nonsensical in the global age because everything—people, material/products, information—works together beyond space and time by using technologies such as the Internet, and faster and more secure transportation systems. In addition, the contents of anime and manga are the results of a hybridization of cultures. Thus, stating the uniqueness of the nationality of anime and manga is not realistic, either.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed the roles of three main actors—fans of anime and manga, businesses, and the Japanese government—in the globalization of anime and manga. Fans have created virtual transnational communities to share their experiences and increase the number of anime and manga fans; businesses legally distribute anime and manga as well as produce diverse manga/ anime products to attract their consumers; and the Japanese government promotes anime and manga to support Japanese content businesses and improve the image of Japan around the world. The aims of these three actors are very different, consisting of pleasure for fans, profits for businesses, and nationalism for the government; however, all three actors, in fact, have led manga and anime to globalize. As a result, this triangular relationship shows the way of globalizing anime and manga.

However, this paper must emphasize that the government's activities are contradictory. Their activities lead globalization by supporting international businesses; on the other hand, they promote nationalism. This research has revealed that globalization and nationalism are two sides of the same coin. Analyzing the mechanisms involved in the globalizing of anime and manga reveals the shape of the contemporary globalization that is happing.

Notes

[i] World Cosplay Summit (2013) Retrieved from http://www.tv-aichi.co.jp/wcs/what/

[ii] METI. (2012). *クリエイティブ産業海外展開強化に向けた調査報告書 (Report on Creative Industries in Overseas Development).* p.5. Retrieved from http://www.meti.go.jp/committee/kenkyukai/seisan/cool_japan/pdf/011_s02_00.pdf#search= 'メディアミックス＋政府'

[iii] Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. (2011). *Cool Japan / Creative Industries Policy*. Retrieved from http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/mono_info_service/creative_industries/creative_industries.html

[iv] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2014). *よくある質問集　文化外交 (Frequently Asked Questions Cultural*

Diplomacy). Retrieved from http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/comment/faq/culture/gaiko.html

[v] The International MANGA Award. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.manga-award.jp/jp/whats.html

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